

Art and Human Reality

Reflection Paper by Daniel Kenneth Villanueva, Vanessa Patricio, and Tristan Ibaoc

Indicate whether you agree or disagree with Dutton's essay.

I agree with the essay for its arguments seem to be cohesive. To further elaborate, the concept of art being forged from both culture and evolution at the same time is something that I have not thought about. I was able to be convinced by the examples that art came from both culture and evolution for they showed how by evolution, people could develop an understanding of art before the age that they could be taught about what art should be and by culture, people are able to have a shared understanding of art. I also was able to see from this article how it is important to view art from its less controversial cases before trying to go to the extremities of our understanding of art.

Give three-five important points of the essay and share your understanding of each point.

Modern human personality only existed 10000 years ago.

Humans from the beginning of Pleistocene period (a period between 1.6 million and 10000 years ago) are very different from humans 10000 years ago for the humans 10000 years ago contain an understanding of culture that is close to our contemporary understanding of culture.

The three factors of artistic expression are: pleasure, universality, and spontaneity of the arts.

The pleasure factor of artistic expression comes from the fact that we simply find the arts pleasurable. This could be seen from our consumption of fictional media, especially consumption that could not be explained as something done for material gain. The universality factor comes from the fact that people from multiple countries can come together and enjoy the same art. This is manifested even before the internet, meaning that disparate groups of people were able to traverse a journey so that in the end, they would appreciate the same art as the citizens from another country. The spontaneity of the arts factor comes from the fact that even 3-year-old

children can create art. This is significant for 3-year-olds are not able to manually be taught the meaning and importance of art.

Cultural and evolutionary reasons can explain the appreciation of art in society.

Culture molds our appreciation of the arts by giving us a social framework for which we would be able to understand art. Evolution explains our appreciation of the arts by insinuating that people who were not able to perform the art well would in some way or another be selected out for their inabilities. It turns out that both explanations are necessary to be used at the same time to understand a facet of the world of art.

An example given is a tourist that unable to appreciate New Guinean art at the same level as a New Guinean native or a New Guinean art connoisseur can. Although both groups have a cultural connection from the fact that they both hold New Guinean art with appreciation, the tourist does not have any evolutionary precedent to choose the better New Guinean art. The tourist has not been sufficiently penalized for making wrong choices as to which New Guinean art is better and the tourist most likely won't be penalized for the tourist simply came in order to find a New Guinean object to appreciate and the tourist has no intention nor motivation to find the best New Guinean art.

The insinuation that people of distinct cultures could not understand each other's art is untrue.

The insinuation that people of distinct cultures could not understand each other's art could be debunked by looking at our xenophobic presumptions with a critical lens.

In order to debunk the claim that a person tuning a Sitar for 10 minutes is considered a laudable piece of art, one only needs to imagine how seeing a person tuning a Sitar for 10 minutes. We would be able to see that none of the audience thinks that tuning a Sitar is the work of art itself. The true work of art comes from the performance after the tuning of the Sitar.

However, even this modicum of reflection is mostly not seen in our media because we want to be able to justify our cruelty and distance to our fellow human beings by looking at them as somebody that is irreconcilably different from us. In our desperate attempt to create a semblance of an in-group, we create these urban legends in order to paint a view of the world that we are different from others and that our ways are more righteous than theirs.

Art is best understood by looking at the less controversial cases of it before looking at more controversial examples.

This fact that art is best understood by looking at the less controversial cases of it before looking at more controversial examples is most salient when looking at examples such as Fountain by Marcel Duchamp. Without having an idea as to how works like Michelangelo's The Last Supper is art, we would not be able to see how Fountain is in fact a subversion of art that is of similar quality as The Last Supper. This kind of thinking has a precedent for we do not start looking for the definition of murder by debating whether abortion is murder. We start by looking whether killing an innocent person with a gun while outnumbering him 10-to-1 is murder.

Another reason why we should look at non-controversial cases first is that by looking at non-controversial cases first, it is easier to create a definition. Although, the fringes may motivate the creation of definition in the first place, without having a non-controversial basis, we would not be able to resolve the problem at the fringes due to the fact that we would not a basis point from which we could decide whether we would incorporate the controversial case into our definition or not.

If we do not have an idea what art even is, how could we decide that Marcel Duchamp's Fountain could be called art in the first place?